

EXTRACTS

FROM AN

ESSAY

ON

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION,

By M O N R O.



L O N D O N :

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BY H. O. W. O.



LONDON:

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A

EXTRACTS FROM AN ESSAY

ON Christian EDUCATION.

§. I. **I** Cannot think of any thing, the *Consequences* whereof are more likely to have an *auspicious* and *happy Influence* on all that is *dear* and *valuable* to Mankind, than *serious* and *heartly Endeavours* to educate Youth according to the *Maxims* of *Christianity*. And certainly the more *universal* these *Endeavours* are, especially when they are the Result of pious Inclinations, and accompanied with an humble Dependance on the Conduct and Assistance of Heaven, the *greater* will the *Benefit* be that we may justly hope will redound thereby to the *Christian World*, and particularly that a Stop may be put, in some measure, to the *Current* of that Deluge of *Atheism* and Irreligion of Immorality and Vice, that is like to *carry* all before it, and which we may, without Scruple, determine

is owing to that *supine Negligence* and *wretched Indifferency*, with which this *great Concern* is almost every where managed. 'Tis true, there are other Things that have contributed to the *Degeneracy of Christendom*; yet I may safely venture to say, that the Want of *conscientious Care* in the Education of Youth, has been in a special manner the *Source* of it, and laid the Foundation for those other Mischiefs which have disgraced our holy Religion; and if we should take our Measures of it from the Lives of its Professors, we must confess it hath set *Christianity* on the same Level with *Paganism* and *Turcism*. And therefore, if I was Master of the most *persuasive* and *moving Eloquence*, had I the Tongue of an Angel, and could deliver myself in such *winning Strains*, as would infallibly gain the Consent of those whom I would address, I would chuse to employ my Faculty in nothing more willingly, than in pressing and exhorting all intrusted with the Inspection of Youth, to labour with all the Care imaginable, and the most unwearied Diligence, to train them up betimes in the solid Knowledge and Practice of *Christian Piety*.

§. II. But though I have no such Faculty of Discourse, whereby I might hope to accomplish my Design; yet I have some few Things to offer, which, in my Opinion, ought

ought to go much farther with all reasonable and thinking Persons, than the Force of the most florid Eloquence ; and with which I am persuaded all good Souls will immediately close.

§. III. And that the *Weight* and *Moment* of what I am to say may appear with the *greater Evidence*, I earnestly intreat you to consider, with some seriousness, what those *Interests* are that you incline to look on as most *valuable* and *precious*, that touch you most *sensibly*, that lie nearest your Hearts, and whereof, before all others, you would wish the *Prosperity* and *Advancement* ; and I undertake to evince, that nothing has a more *auspicious Aspect* on them, or can tend more effectually to promote and prosper them, than the *pious Education* of Youth.

§. IV. Is it the *Church* and its *Concerns* ? It cannot indeed be deny'd but these ought to be very dear unto us ; they are the *Concerns* of our *blessed Redeemer* ; and therefore we are obliged to *prefer them above our chief Joy*. But when I speak of the *Church*, I would not be understood to mean a *particular Sect* or *Party* of Men, who would confine that *sacred Designation* only to those of their own Way ; I mean the *Christian Church* in general, and all others, as they are Parts of that great Body. This is the *Jerusalem* whereof we, who

who are her *Children*, (a) should always preserve a *dutiful* and *sympathising* Remembrance, especially now in her *languishing* and *clouded* State; when she who once was, and still ought to be, the *Beauty of all Lands*, and the *Glory of the whole Earth*, is stript of her *Ornaments*, fallen from her *Excellency*, and become a *Proverb* and a *By-word* to the *Heathens* and *Infidels* that are round about her. It is, alas! too visible, that the present State of the Church affords but a very *melancholy Prospect*, and furnishes a *just Occasion* to *renew* the mournful Strains of *Jeremiah*: *Of all her pleasant Things* (b) *that she had in the Days of old*, the *Heroick Piety*, the *serious Devotion*, the *amiable Graces*, and *beautiful Unity*, that were so conspicuous in her in the first Times of the Gospel, nothing scarcely now remains, but an *afflicting Remembrance*: *The Gold is become dim*, (c) *and the most fine Gold changed*; the vital and solid, and undisguised Religion, the *Wisdom from above*, that is *pure* and *peaceable*; and in the Esteem of *Solomon*, (d) *more precious than Rubies*, which shone with so much Brightness in the *primitive Saints*, hath lost its *Lustre*, and is degenerate into *shadowy Appearances* and *false Imitations* of Piety. *The Stones of the Sanctuary*; they who by being initiated into the
Christian

(a) Psal. cxxxvii. 5, 6. (b) Lam. i. 7. (c) Lam. iv. 1.
 (d) Prov. viii. 2.

Christian Religion, have been consecrated to be the Materials of this sacred Edifice, *are poured out in the Top of every Street*; are by a *dismal Multiplicity* of Scisms and Divisions, scatter'd and separated from one another; so that the *Spirit of Love*, and its lovely Attendants, *Unity and Concord*, once the *Badge and Character* of the Disciples of the holy *Jesus*, are scarce any where discernable among *Christians*. And where this *divine Fire*, I mean the Love of God and Man, which is the very *Life and Soul*, as well as the *Sum and Substance* of *vital Piety*, waxes cold, and is extinguished in the Hearts of Men, it is not possible but all Sorts of abominable Disorders must of Necessity be the Consequence of it.

§. V. I am perswaded, that as this is a *true Representation* of the Church in her present State, so it cannot be but very *afflicting and uneasy* to all serious Hearts. These to be sure must weep when they remember the spiritual Desolations of *Sion*, and will *hang their Harps upon the Willows*. But then it is to be observ'd, that those good Souls, when well inform'd, are not so much concern'd for the *outward Form and Dress* into which the Church is moulded, as for its *internal Beauty and Soundness*, which consists in this, That *the Divine Life* exert its Power and Efficacy in the Hearts and Lives of *Christians*;

Christians; that the *Evangelical Graces* and *Virtues*, a *living Faith*, a *fervent Love*, an *universal Self-denial*, a *generous Contempt* of the *World*, the *Imitation* of the *Redeemer*, and all those other *Ornaments*, those *Fruits* of the *Spirit*, which in the *Sight* of *God* are of *great Price*, be in their *Vigour*, and duly exercised.

§. VI. Now I am hopeful, that I shall prove *evidently*, and to the *Conviction* of all that are *candid* and *serious*, that nothing can have a more happy *Tendency* to promote these *excellent* and *noble Ends*, than the *Pious Education* of *Youth*. This is the great *Mean* that must vigorously be put in *Execution*, to the *End* that the *Church* may recover her *Beauty*, by the *Revival* of *Primitive Christianity* in her *Members*. And that the *Truth* of this may appear, let it be considered, that the *Church* is then in a *prosperous State*, when, on the one *Hand*, her *Pastors* are generally *pious* and *devout*, burning with a *mighty Zeal* for *God*, and a *sincere Love* to the *Souls* of *Men*; when they possess the *real* and *solid Knowledge* of *divine Things*, and are *practically* acquainted with those *Rules* and *Motives* of *holy Living*, which they recommend to others; when they are *indefatigable* in their *Endeavours*, to make their *People Disciples*, not to this, or that, or the other *great Name*, but to *Jesus Christ*; to
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gain them, not to the *Principles* and *Opinions* of a Party, but to the *great*, and *necessary*, and *indispensable* Things of our holy Religion; and in fine, when their *exemplary*, *unblamable*, and *heavenly* Lives, speak and preach, exhort and convince the World, that they are in *Earnest*; that they *really* believe what they *teach* concerning God, Jesus Christ, and another World; that they *bind* no *Burden* on others, but what themselves are willing to bear; and that it was not the *Advantage* of a Living, but that they might *advance* the Good of Souls, that induced them to undertake the *Pastoral Charge*: And on the other, when the People are *docile* and *tractable*, of *serious Dispositions*, chusing rather to be under the *Influence* of those who have *Experience* of divine Things, than under their own *unsanctified Wills*; willing to be *reproved* when they do *amiss*, and ready to *amend* without Delay; have an humble Sense of the *Darkness* of their Understandings, and are well pleased to be set free from their *Mistakes*; desirous to improve still more and more in *Goodness* and *Virtue*, to grow in Grace and Knowledge, in Purity and Devotion, not contenting themselves with what they have already *attained*, but generously *aspiring* after *Christian Perfection*. I say, when Pastors and People shall have these, and other the like noble and excellent Qualities, then will the *Place of the Sanctuary* be *beautiful*, and *Jerusalem a Praise to the whole Earth*;

then those good Souls, that *mourn'd in Sion*, that piously bewail'd the *Desolations* of the Church, will have good Reason to put off their *Sackcloth*, and gird themselves with *Gladness*; for they shall see *Peace within her Walls*, and *Prosperity* within her Palaces: Her *Wilderness* shall become as *Eden*, and her *Desart* like the *Garden* of the Lord.

§. VII. But then if ever we have the Happiness to behold a *joyful Turn* of Affairs, and to see the Church in any Measure recover her *primitive Beauty* and *Purity*, it will without doubt be in a special Manner owing to *Diligence and Fidelity*, in promoting the pious Education of Youth. No other Thing that we can imagine is more likely to have so *blessed* an Issue, as *vigorous and unwearied* Endeavours to *acquaint* the Youth, as soon as may be, with *God and Themselves*; to let them understand the immense Love and Good-Will he has towards them; to excite their *Desires*, and to *direct* them towards the *true Objects*; and thereby to *engage* them to place their Affections on *God and divine Things*; and so to nourish them in the *Principles and Practices* of *Christian Piety*, that they may grow up with them as they *advance* in Years. It is plain, that by these Means *Religion* and its *sacred Exercises* will become *habitual* to them; the *very Element*, (if I may so speak) in which they will *breath* and
move;

move; and which will be so *interwoven*, as it were, with their Souls, that it will not be easy for them ever afterwards to shake off that *sweet* and *pleasant* Yoke, to which they have been so long *inured*. Now it will be no hard Matter to determine how happy the *Result* of these pious Endeavours will be, with Respect to the *Church*: For every Body will be sensible, that when a *Youth*, who, as soon as his Capacity did begin to appear, began also to be *instructed* in the *Principles*, and train'd up in the *serious Practice* of Religion; who hath been taught the *Excellency* and *Worth* of the Soul, and the Methods by which it must be carried on to that blessed *End*, for which it was *design'd*; who possesses, not meerly a *notional Knowledge*, but the *Reality* and *Substance* of divine Things; and who in his own Experience has felt the *Power* and *Efficacy* of divine Truths, seen the *Beauty* of the Ways of Wisdom, and tasted the *Pleasures* of walking in them: I say, every Body must be sensible, that when such a *Youth* comes afterwards to be *advanced* to the Pastoral Charge, he will be an *eminent* and *noble* Instrument for promoting the Good of Souls. His Conversation will be shining and fragrant; because a *living* and an *unaffected* Piety is the Principle of all his Actions: His *Discourses*, whether publick or private, will be *savoury*, and attended with *Force*; for he *speaks* what he *feels*. His Diligence

indefatigable, having a *deep Sense* both of the *Preciousness* of the Souls of Men, and how difficult it is to rescue them out of the *Entanglements* of Sin and Vice. His Prayers *fervent* and *frequent*, as well knowing, that though he *Plant* and *Water*, yet 'tis God that gives the *Encrease*. But on the other Hand, when such *Persons* undertake the *sacred Function*, whose Minds have never been *formed* according to the *Maxims* of *Christian Piety*; who have not been under any *regular Discipline*, but all along permitted to *follow* the Swing of their *natural Inclinations*, to please and gratify all the *Appetites* of Flesh and Blood, and Corruption, without Controll; who have no *Experience* of divine Things, nor any other Knowledge of the Truths of Religion, but what is *speculative* and *superficial*, dry and *jejune*; and are so void of Skill in the *Conduct* of Souls, that they scarce know any Thing of their Duty in that Regard, unless it be to *patch* up a *Discourse*, which by its *studied Periods* and high-flown *Sallies*, exceeding the Capacity of the Vulgar, may *tickle* the Ears of some nice Hearers, but not *touch* the *Hearts* of any. It is easy to see how *fatal* the Consequences of such *Advancements* may be to the Church and the Souls of Men; for it is plain, that they of this Temper are more likely to *propagate* Irreligion and Vice, than to *advance* the Interests of Piety and a holy Life. The *Spirit* and
Maxims

Maxims of the World, according to which they have been educated, will now begin to appear, and betray them into such *shameful* Immoralities, as will *expose* their *Character* to Contempt and Scorn, *baffle* all their Exhortations, render every Thing they say, in favour of Religion, not only *ineffectual*, but even *ridiculous*; make the *less Thinking* take up with *false* Notions of Piety; concluding, that since the Pastor does nothing but *talk* and *discourse* of Religion, it will be enough for them to hear what he says; and in fine, they will give Ground to *atheistical* and *prophane* Wits, to cry out of *Priest-craft*, of *Cheat* and *Imposture*: And indeed, if the *Causes* of that *Atheism* and *Libertinism*, which at present abound in the *Christian* World, were *seriously* inquired into, I make no doubt but the sad *Miscarriages* of the *Ministers* of Religion would be found to be a *principal* One.

§. VIII. But yet farther; if we shall suppose that they who have been *piously* Educated, and to whom the *Christian* Life is become habitual, do still continue in the *rank* of *Lajcks*, the Advantages will be no less conspicuous; for their *exemplary* Piety, and *serious* Devotion; their *Willingness* to learn their Duty, and *Readiness* to do it; their *prudent* Zeal for God and Religion; their *charitable* Instructions, and *discreet* Admonitions,

monitions, and other *heavenly* Graces and religious Practices, will render them *illustrious* Ornaments to the Church, a *great Blessing* to the Neighbourhood in which they live, and *singular Comforts* and *Encouragements* to the *Pastor*, under whose Care Providence hath put them : Whereas others, who have been irreligious and profane from their Youth, and who have been brought up in a wretched *Disregard* of God and their own Souls, must prove the *reverse* of this, unless they are reclaimed. And indeed, though it be not impossible but they may be so, while they are in this State of Trial ; yet it is not so *ordinary* for those, who, notwithstanding the Advantages of the *Means* of Grace and Salvation, which they have long enjoy'd, are *confirm'd* in Wickedness, to become Votaries of a holy Life.

§. IX. Before I leave this Head, it will not be improper to take notice, that it is the *Misfortune* of some to be educated under the *Conduet* of those that are *Disciples* to a *Party*. Now it is certain, that such Persons are wont to look on the *Opinions* and *Practices* which are peculiar to their Way, as the *great Things* of Religion ; or at least, as *necessary* and *indispensable Things* : For otherwise, that is, if they consider'd them as not *essential* to Religion, or as Things, without which *Christian Piety* may *subsist*, and *eternal Life* may be attained,

attained, it were unreasonable to keep such a clutter about them. And because they lay so great a Stress on them, it comes to pass, and it is an Observation, which the Experience of all that are candid and impartial will justify, that this sort of People will be more zealous in asserting the *Opinions*, and more precise and punctual in observing the *Practices* that distinguish their *Party*, than in maintaining the *known* and *fundamental* Truths, and in obeying the *great* and *unquestionable* Duties of the *Christian* Religion. This being undeniably the Case, we need not doubt but these zealous *Votaries* will take Care, that the *Doctrines* and *Principles* of their own *Way*, be with *Diligence* instill'd into the *Youth* that shall happen to fall under their Inspection, will teach them to put the *same Value* on these Things that they do themselves, and beget in them an *early Dislike* and *Aversion* at those that differ from them, as being either no *Christians* at all, or but very *bad* ones. And these *Documents* will make the deeper *Impression* upon them, stick the more closely, and even be received of them as *oracular* and *infallible Maxims*, because they are deliver'd to them with an *Air of Seriousness*, and in a *peremptory* and *decisive* Tone. Now it is evident, that when the *Youth*, leaven'd with these *Infusions*, and highly conceited of the *Doctrines* which their *Teachers* have, with a *peculiar Eagerness*, inculcated on them, come

come to appear in the World, either in the *Quality of Preachers or Hearers*, the *main Thing* that they will spend their Zeal on, will be to *advance*, not so much the *great and necessary Truths and Practices of Religion*, as the *Scheme and Principles of their own Way*; to engage People not so much to be *sincere and humble Christians*, as to become *Profelytes* to the *Sect* which they have been taught to consider as the *special Favourites of Heaven*; whence it will come to pass, that a *Spirit of Schism and Division, of Dislike and Enmity, of Fars and Discord*, will be *propagated among Christians*, from Generation to Generation: For it is very observable, that not only the *Doctrines and Opinions*, but also the *Spirit, the Temper and Dispositions, the politick Maxims and Contrivances of a Party*, are *derived down, and descend from the Parents to the Children, from the Teacher to the Disciple*, and animate and influence all that *blindly and injudiciously espouse it*; and how mischievous this hath been to the *Christian Church*, needs not be told; the *dismal and melancholy Effects* that it hath produced, are, alas! but too *visible and common to escape the Observation of any*: All good Souls, to be sure, are *deeply sensible of them*, and bewail them, and heartily *wish*, that the *Youth* were so *happy*, as to be under the *Care and Inspection* of those, who being themselves *well acquainted with the Genius, and Spirit, and Designs*

Designs of the Christian Religion, would give just Notions of it to all they have the Charge of; and teach them, that the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; that in Jesus Christ, neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision availeth any Thing, but a new Creature; a divinely reformed Heart and Life; a Faith that is animated by Love, that purifies our inner Man, derives a divine Life and Force into our Souls, renders us nobly victorious over our ghostly Enemies, powerfully engages us in the Imitation of our Redeemer, and makes us generously to aspire after Conformity to him in his Cross, and Sufferings, and amiable Graces: In short, that Christianity consists not in Speculations and Opinions, in outward Observances and Formalities, but in Life and Power, in heavenly Dispositions and devout Affections, in a divine Rectitude and Purity of Soul, which is ever attended with a peaceful Serenity, and blessed with the Presence of that good Spirit, who delights to dwell in hallowed Minds, and fills them with Joys unspeakable and full of Glory; and that all other Things are no otherwise valuable, than as either they issue from, or have some happy Influence upon these more excellent, as well as more necessary and indispensable Things. O how unspeakable would be the Benefit of Education thus managed! What innumerable Advantages would thereby redound to the

Church and the Souls of Men ! A Spirit of *universal Charity* and *good Will*, of *Sweetness* and *Benignity*, of *Condescension* and *Forbearance*, of *Peace* and *Unity*, would quickly *revive* and *spread* it self ; *Seſtarian Bigottry* gradually *vanish* ; the great Things of Religion would be *priz'd* and *valu'd* ; *ſolid* and *ſubſtantial Piety cultivated* ; thoſe little *Oipinions* and *Practices*, that have been look'd on as *important* Things, and concerning which ſo much *Duſt* hath been raiſed, would ſoon loſe their *Value* and *Reputation*, and the *Spirit of Controverſy* happily *expire* and *die*.

§. X. From all that hath been ſaid, it evidently appears, that it is to a *well* or *ill* managed *Education*, that the Church in a great Measure owes her *Successes* or *Diſappointments*, either in her *Paſtors* or *People* ; and therefore we may juſtly expect, that all thoſe pious Souls, who lament her preſent *Diſorders* and *Corruptions*, and with the *Recovery* of her primitive happy Eſtate, will do all they can to advance a *Concern*, which tends ſo directly to bring about that moſt *deſirable* Revolution.

§. XI. Another Thing, which without doubt you wiſh the *Proſperity* and *Welfare* of, is the *State* or *Common-Wealth*. And indeed it is no Wonder you ſhould do ſo ; for it is on the *good* or *bad* Poſture of Affairs in
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it that the *temporal Happiness* or *Misery* of Mankind depends. There are a great many *disfmal* Evils and Calamities that sometimes *abound* in the *State*; which, if they were traced up to their *Original*, would be found to spring from want of *due Care* and *proper Methods*, in the Education of Youth. You will ever and anon hear some crying out of *Injustice*; others groaning under *Oppression*; a third Sort bemoaning the *Losses* they have sustained by Thefts and Roberies; you will be informed of Murders and Perjuries, of Rebellions and Insurrections; you will observe that Tricks, and Cunning, and Coyetousness; that Deceit and Fraud are found in all Sorts of *Trades*, *Employments* and *Occupations*: And to what can these and the like *Disorders*, which *shake* and disturb the *Peace* and *Quiet*, and *undermine* the *Pleasure* and *Advantages* of civil Society, be more probably imputed than to this, that People have not been *betimes* instructed in the *Principles* of Religion, have not had their Minds *formed* according to the *Precepts* of Jesus Christ, have not been taught the Duties they owe their Neighbour in *every Capacity* and *Station*, nor *trained* up in the Practice of them from their *younger Years*; have not been acquainted with the Importance and Necessity of performing the *relative* Obligations of Religion, nor with the Motives that enforce them; nor, in fine, have been *directed* to desire earnestly that *Grace* which only

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can enable us to fulfill them? And what Wonder is it, if they who never have *learned* any thing, but the *Maxims* of the *World*; who have always been under the *Dictates* of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and natural *Corruption*; who have never seen any thing in their *Parents* and *Overseers*, but *Immorality* and *Vice*, a *Contempt* of *God* and *divine Things*, a *stupid Unconcernedness* for their *Souls*; and who perhaps have been taught to *ridicule* all that is *Grave* and *Serious*, *Just* and *Sober*, as *mean* and *sneaking Qualities*? What Wonder is it, I say, if such Persons prove very dishonest and unjust, in any *Trade*, *Occupation* or *Employment*, they may happen to have the *Management* of? If they *boggle* not at the most criminal and mischievous *Actions*, when their *Lusts* can be thereby gratified, and they may commit them with *Impunity*; and if when they fall into any *Station*, they *manage* it not for the *Benefit* of the *Publick*, but to serve the *Ends* of their *Ambition* and *Covetousness*, their *Pride* and *Revenge*; these are the *Pests* of the *State*, the *Plagues* of *Society*, and *Troublers* of the *Peace* of *Mankind*.

§. XII. But then on the other Hand, a *virtuous* and well *ordered Education*, hath an *happy Influence* on the *State* in all its *Parts* and *Concerns*. 'Tis this that *sets pious* and *religious Princes* on the *Throne*, that fills our *Benches* with *just* and *impartial Judges*, that puts Men
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of *Candour* and *Integrity* in every *Station* and *Employment*, blesses every *Relation* with Persons well *acquainted* with the Duties of it, and *inclined* to perform them. And in one Word, 'tis *this* that on the one Hand makes *Magistrates* to be Men of *publick Spirit*, acted not by *mean* and *selfish*, but *generous* and *noble* Principles; that readily *conceive* and vigorously *execute* great and extensive *Designs* and *Projects* for the *common Good*. That are *zealous* for *God* and his *Honour*, *encourage Religion*, *assert* its *Interests*, *honour* and *regard* its *Votaries*; that *punish* and *chastise Vice* and *Immoralities*, and will give no *Countenance* to the *Abettors* of *Irreligion* and *Debauchery*, but *terrify* and *discourage* all *Sorts* of *Evil-Doers*; that will *enact* equitable and wholesome *Laws*, and take *Care* that they be *impartially* put in *Execution*; that reform *Abuses* and *Corruptions*, *rescue* the *Oppressed*, and do *speedy Justice* to the *Poor* and *Needy*: And on the other Hand, 'tis *this* that renders the People *managable* and *submissive*, *peaceable* and *obedient*, not apt to *murmer* at every little *Inconveniency*, but willing to put the most *favourable Construction* upon the *Actions* of their *Superiors*, and ready to *assist* and *concur* with them in whatever may tend to the *Benefit* of the *Publick*.

§. XIII. These are some of the *blessed Advantages* that *result* from a *pious Education*, with respect to the *Common-Wealth*. They who
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have been bred up from their Infancy in the *Fear* and *Love* of God, and so are become *habitually* good and virtuous, will *adorn* every Station and Profession, *recommend* every Trade and Occupation, and even render them *publick Blessings*, and great *Benefits*. These are the *usefullest* and most profitable *Members* of the State, its strongest *Supports*, as well as greatest *Ornaments*, and who either by their *Piety* prevent God's Judgments, or by their *standing in the Gap* avert them when they are *deserved* and *impendant*; the blessed God being wont, *for their Sake*, to spare an otherwise very sinful Nation; and certainly the more *numerous* these excellent *Persons* are, the more *prosperous* and *flourishing* is the State. Wherefore it is the Interest, as well as Duty, of all, to endeavour, by all possible *Means*, to advance a Concern that is attended with Consequences so happy and advantageous to all. But to proceed.

§. XIV. Is it the *Welfare* and *Happiness* of your *Children* that you desire? Yes to be sure. This without Controversy is one of those Concerns that you most *dearly* prize and value; this *employs* your Thoughts and Cares, and has a very powerful *Sway* on your Affections. Neither indeed ought we to wonder that it should very feelingly touch you, and lie near your Hearts, since the very *Instincts* of Nature, and those the most vigorous and
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powerful of all others, push you on to be solicitous about it; and to endeavour its Advancement at any rate; and certainly to be *regardless* of it, is Evidence enough of one's being divested of all *Humanity*, and having sunk below the *Brutes*, in whose Carriage towards their young Ones a very passionate and surprizing *Tendernefs* is discernable. But what *Happiness* is it you desire for them? This you ought to examine with Care and Seriousness; lest you *mistake* their true Interests, and imagine that they are *truly* happy, when indeed they are *certainly* miserable. Is it that they may *abound* in the Enjoyments of this World; in *Riches* and *Pleasures*; be *advanced* to Honours and Dignities, have *Pomp* and *Grandeur*, vast Inheritances and Possessions, and whatever else can *flatter* their Senses? Alas! these are *poor* and *contemptible* Things! They are of a *fading* *momentary* and *limited* Nature, and can but produce a *shadowy*, *scanty*, and very *imperfect* Happiness, and such as *reaches* only to the outward Man, and *gratifies* the Appetites of Flesh and Blood; whereas the *divine* and *more noble Part* may be poor and miserable, and destitute, even in the greatest *Affluence*, of all Sorts and Varieties of *Earthly* Pleasures and Enjoyments: For these Objects are not only *unsuitable*, but *disproportion'd* to its vast Capacities, to which only an *infinite* Good can give *full Quiet* and Satisfaction. But though it is to be fear'd that there are too many, whose
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Desires in Favour of their *Offspring* rise no higher than these perishing and despicable Things; and who, not being *conscious* of any Soul within themselves, but what *only serves* the Purposes of a meer *animal Life*, conclude that their Children are *happy* enough, if they possess in Abundance what may answer the Cravings of the *Lust* of the Eye, the Lust of the *Flesh*, and the Pride of *Life*; yet we hope there are some that are acted by *nobler Principles*, and who, being sensible of the *Vanity* and Insufficiency of all created Things to constitute a *solid Happiness*, and knowing that they were *designed* for infinitely more *excellent* Enjoyments, not only *aspire* after them themselves, but also are excited vehemently to desire, that their Children may, together with them, be made *Partakers* of those *great* and only *valuable* Things: that is, to have the *beatifick Vision* and *Fruition* of God; to be admitted into his *Presence*, there to continue for ever, and to be entertain'd with the *Fulness* of his *Joys*; to be *glorified* with the *Redeemer*, and to *sit with him* on his *Throne*; to be made *like* unto the *Angels*, and to partake in their *blissful* Employments; in one Word, to inherit the never-ending *Glories* of Eternity; and, in order to be *qualified* for these blessed Enjoyments, to be *born* of God; to be *transformed* by the *Renewing* of the Spirit of their *Mind*; to *put off* the *Old Man with his Deeds*, and put on the *New*; to have *Corruption* and
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Sin, and all Sorts of *Defilements*, rooted out of the Soul, and *Purity* and *Righteousness* introduced into it, so as that the *Love of God*, and the other *Christian Graces* that adorn and beautify the inward Man, may spring up and appear in their Vigour. This is true Happiness, and the infallible Way to it; and to desire and endeavour that your Children may be thus happy, is indeed to wish well to them, and to desire their *Prosperity*. And the Truth is, whatever other Proofs of your Affections you pretend to give them, if this great and only important One be wanting, they are but very little to be valued; for to take Care of their *Bodies*, and to be regardless of their *Souls*; to pamper their *Flesh*, and to starve their better Part; to be diligent in providing them with *earthly Inheritances*, and to use no Endeavours to secure them the *heavenly and incorruptible* One; to procure that they be instructed, and exercised, in the *Languages, Learning and Sciences* of the World, and never seriously to acquaint them with the *Maxims* of the Gospel, nor exercise them in the *Practice of Christian Piety*, is cruelly to undo them, and to involve them in eternal Miseries.

§. XV. Now what more effectual Methods can be taken to entitle them to the Happiness just now mentioned, and to prevent their final and utter Ruin and Destruction, than to begin, as soon as is possible, to instil good In-

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structions into their tender Hearts; to awaken their *Desires*, and turn them toward God, their *adorable Original*, and the infinitely *amiable Source of Light and Love*; to engage them in the *Imitation* of their Redeemer, and in the *Love* of his *Cross*, and *Sufferings*, and *Self-Denial*; that is, in short, to educate them piously. For so, with the Blessing of God, they will become *early Votaries* to Religion, the *peculiar Favourites* of Heaven, and young *Candidates* for eternal Life; and so gradually advancing unto the *Measure* of the *Stature* of the *Fulness* of Christ, they will at last be capable of *Admission* into the *Bliss* and *Glory* of the other World. O what a Pity is it, that Parents should be so wretchedly *careless* and *remiss* in managing this great Affair! Alas, how can they *pretend* Love to their Children, and yet be *forgetful* of this *eminent Instance* of it, which would be so infinitely *beneficial* to them; and without which all the other *Kindnesses* they can shew them are very *inconsiderable*, and indeed no more than what the Brutes do for their young Ones?

§. XVI. But farther; perhaps it is the *Salvation* of your own Souls that you are *solicitous* for: I wish with all my Heart, that this *Solicitude* did more *universally* prevail; for then I am confident, that the Care of a pious Education would be more universal than it is. They that *seriously* mind the *Concerns* of their
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own Souls, will not fail to *look after* the Souls of their Children; and whoever is *indifferent* as to the one, will certainly be *regardless* of the other. The *Instinct* of Nature prompts Parents to do Good to their Children; but *Religion* exalts that Instinct, gives more *noble Tendencies*, *higher Aims*, and a *diviner* Byass, whereby those in whom it is thus elevated, are moved to do more excellent Things, than *bare* and *unassisted* Nature could suggest or enable them to do; for hence it comes to pass, that all *sincerely* religious Parents, being themselves made *Partakers* of the *Divine* Nature, are strongly inclined to propagate it to their Children, and use all possible *Endeavours* to compass so valuable an End. And indeed, all whose Souls the *divine* Life animates and influences, are exceeding *zealous* to *reproduce* and diffuse it every where; but more especially in those, to whom they have any *Relation*, whereby they are invested with Power and Authority over them; such as is that of a *Parent*, a *Pastor*, a *Master* or *Teacher*, a *Tutor* or *Governour*. They *travail in Birth*, as the great Apostle did heretofore, until *Christ* be *formed in them*. They *wrestle* and *strive* by their *Prayers*, and *Tears*, and *Endeavours*; by admonishing and exhorting; by teaching and instructing; and by all the *pious Arts* that a *servent* *Charity* can suggest; to the End that all under their *Care* may become the *living Images* of *Jesus Christ*. Their *Love* to

God, that *pure* and *heavenly* Flame that *burns* in their Hearts, *disposes* them to excite and engage as many as possibly they can to *join* with them in the *Adoration*, *Love* and *Praises* of his amiable Perfections; and their *Charity* to Man *inclines* them not only to *desire*, but to *endeavour*, so far as their *Influence* can reach, that their *Fellow Creatures*, and particularly those *dear Parts* of themselves, their *Children*, should *partake* with them in the *Pleasures* and *Advantages* of those infinitely agreeable and delightful Employments. They are *eager* on the one Hand, that the ever blessed Object of their Love should be *magnified* and *celebrated* by all; and on the other, that all should be *bappy* in the Fruition of him. These are the generous Inclinations, these the noble Instincts and charitable Projects with which true Religion inspires the Souls of Men.

§. XVII. From all this, I think, it is abundantly evident, that wherever sincere and vital Piety is, serious Endeavours of a *pious Education* will be the *natural* Consequence of it; and therefore for any One to pretend that he is *concerned* for his own Soul, and yet to *neglect* those of his Children, is *meer Illusion* and *Hypocrisy*: For the *Spirit* of true Religion, as we have seen, is *diffusive*, and loves to *spread* it self; it is a *Spirit* of *universal Charity* and *Good Will*; and therefore they that are *acted* by it, as they *wish* the Happiness of all,

all, so they labour with *all their Might* to set them in the right Way that leads to it; and more especially they will do so, with Respect to those whom the *divine Providence* has put under their immediate *Direction* and *Conduct*, and for whom they are *accountable* to God, the *Judge* of *all*, and the *Father* of *Spirits*, who hath committed them to their Care, as so many *Talents*, which he expects they should *improve* for his Service, and to his Honour and Glory.

§. XVIII. But besides, I do not understand how *Religion*, and consequently the *Hope* of *Salvation*, can possibly consist with either the *total Neglect*, or even *superficial Performance* of so important a Duty as this is; with *disobeying* a Command so *frequently* and so *solemnly* urged upon us, as is that which enjoins the *Care* of a pious Education; with the *Violation* of those *mighty Obligations* which *Nature*, *Reason*, and *Religion*, do unanimously and jointly lay upon us. To be sure our *Piety* must be at a *low Ebb*, must be *lame* and *imperfect*, and even *defective* in its *Vitals*, when we are *regardless* of any *notable Branch* of it; such as, without doubt, this that we are treating of is: For the *relative Duties* make a very considerable Part of Religion; and of all those, none is more *important*, or more *seriously* and more *frequently* inculcated, than that of *Parents* to their *Children*. With what *Earnest-*
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ness and Concern does *Moses* bespeak the *Israelites* on this Head! How *passionately* does he recommend to them, to acquaint their Children with the *sacred Oracles* that he delivered to them in the Name of God, and to do it, not in a *trifling* and superficial Manner, but with the greatest Care and Diligence, and most indefatigable Endeavours! *And these Words*, saith he (a) *which I command thee this Day, shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* And this Injunction he repeats, and presses on them again and again (b); thereby intimating, that this Affair is of the greatest Moment and Importance; that their own and their Childrens Prosperity and Welfare depended on it, as it there follows (c): And that it is the most effectual Way for *propagating* and *conveying* Religion from Generation to Generation; in which View the Royal Psalmist owns the *Perpetuity* of its Obligation, as appears from these remarkable Words (d) of his. *The Lord hath established a Testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which he commanded our Fore-Fathers that they should make them known*

(a) Deut. vi. 6, 7. (b) Chap. iv. 10, 11, 19. (c) Ver. 21.
 (d) Psalm lxxviii. 4, 5, 6.

known unto their Children. That the Generation to come might know them, even the Children that should be born who should arise and declare to their Children the Praises of the Lord, and his Strength, and his wonderful Works that he hath done. That divine Wisdom wherewith Solomon was inspired, prompted him to deliver many excellent Maxims concerning this great Affair, whereof his Book of Proverbs will present all that seriously peruse it with great Variety. Thus we see that under the Oeconomy of Moses, the Concern of a pious Education was secured, as far as express, solemn and repeated Declarations of the Divine Will for that End could go. And we may be confident, that these Precepts are not antiquated under the Gospel: On the contrary, they are therein ratified and confirmed, and enforced by new and more powerful Motives than ever; For if the Israelites were obliged to teach their Children the Law of Moses, and to inform them of the great and wonderful Things God had done for their Fathers in Egypt, in the Wilderness, at the Red Sea, and after their Settlement in the Land of Canaan; how much more are Christian Parents obliged to instruct theirs in the nobler Institution; to open to them the venerable and endearing Mysteries of our Redemption; to acquaint them with the Life and Doctrine, with the Sufferings and Death, with the Grace and Merits, with the Love and

and *Condescension*, the *all-sufficient Sacrifice* and prevailing *Intercession*, the *Wrestlings* and *Conflicts*, the *victorious Triumphs* and glorious *Exaltation* of the Lord Jesus; and to set before them the *surpassing Discoveries* of the Love of God, not to a *particular People* or *Nation*, but to the *whole World*, to *all the Race* of *Adam* without Exception, in giving them his *only Son*, and his *holy Spirit*; and promising, upon their complying with the *just*, and *equitable*, and *gracious Terms* that he proposes, to give them *himself*, to entertain them with his own ineffable *Joys*, in a State of never-ending *Bliss* and *Glory*. O how *lovely*! how infinitely *gratifying* and agreeable are these *Objects*! These *admirable Contrivances*, these *strange* and *astonishing Effects* of incomprehensible Love and Bounty! How vastly do these *ravishing Discoveries* of the divine Goodness, Power and Wisdom, to *lost* and *undone Mankind*, transcend and out-do all the *Instances* of Care and Kindness, tho' great and signal manifested heretofore to the *Israelites*! And therefore how much more ought the *Memory* of them to be continued from Age to Age, and convey'd from the *Fathers* to the *Children*! To do this, I suppose, is what the great Apostle intends when he enjoins (a) Parents to *bring up* their Children in
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(a) Eph. vi. 4.

the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord: that is, in Effect, to put them in Mind of the great Things their dear Redeemer hath done, and suffered, and merited for them; to inform them of his excellent Doctrines, and of the Example he has given them during his Abode on Earth; and to nourish them in the Love and Imitation of him, and in Obedience and Subjection to his sweet and easy Yoke. O how proper are these endearing Things, when seriously and diligently inculcated, to season young Hearts! to beget and excite true Devotion in them! and to engage them betimes in the Practices of a holy Life!

§. XIX. And now when all this is duly consider'd, with what Face can People pretend to be religious? How can they imagine, that their Salvation is secure, if they either supinely omit, or but slightly perform a Duty of so great Consequence, and so expressly and peremptorily enjoin'd? You may depend upon it, that how unblamable soever you may be as to your own Persons, whatever Exactness you may observe in other Parts of Religion; yet if by your Negligence, or bad Examples, or ill Conduct, the Souls of your Children shall perish, God will severely reckon with you one Day, and may justly require their Blood at your Hands; a Consideration that should make those tremble, who, though

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they are *sensible* of the perverse Tempers, vicious Inclinations, and sinful Practices of their Children; yet use few or no Endeavours to *correct* and *redress* them; but rather, out of *cruel Fondness*, indulge them in all their *Appetites*, please and gratify their *Humours* and *Fancies*, and suffer them, without Check, to go on in their impious Courses, till at last they grow old in Wickedness.

§. XX. I hope, by this Time, all who have consider'd with some Attention what I have hitherto represented, will be convinced, that the Care of a pious Education hath a happy Influence upon our dearest and most valuable Concerns: For you see that the Welfare of Church and State, your own and Childrens Happiness, have visibly a Dependance on it: And is it possible that any, after having made some serious Reflections on all these Particulars, should be *remiss* and *careless* in this Matter? Who is it, unless strangely *infatuated*, that can resist the *persuasive Force* of being *instrumental* to advance so many, and such weighty Interests all at once? What Considerations can possibly prevail with People, to engage them in discharging conscientiously this great Duty, if these here insisted on prove ineffectual? It is justly hoped, that all who have any *Sense* of God and Religion; all that are not resolv'd to *run* the *Risque* of eternal Misery,

Misery, by contributing, through their Negligence, to undo and destroy others, will lay these Things to Heart, and *speedily* and *peremptorily* resolve to look after the Souls of their Children, and to educate them according to the Prescripts of the Gospel.

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Mercy, by combating through their Neg-
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these Things to Heart, and Mercy and for-
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